What is claimed is:

1. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects, said method comprising, in combination, the steps of:

combining each of said objects with an electronic device that can be detected at short range to permit the position and the unique identity of said device to be determined from a distance,

programming a first computer to accept one or more rules from a user, each of said rules containing a condition part and an action part, said condition part defining at least one relative position condition to be satisfied by specified ones of said objects and each action part defining at least one specified action to be performed when said condition part is satisfied,

receiving position and identification data providing relative position and identification information for said specified ones of said objects,

processing said position and identification data in accordance with said rules using said first computer, and

performing the functions defined in the action part of each of said rules whose condition part is satisfied by said position and identification data.

2. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 1 wherein said action part further specifies the content of a message to be delivered when said condition part is satisfied.

3. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 2 wherein said action part further specifies a destination for said message.

4. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 1 wherein said position and identification data is provided at least in part by an interrogation device capable of remotely identifying those electronic devices that are within a predetermined range of said interrogation

device and wherein each of said electronic devices delivers a unique identification value to said interrogation device in response to an inquiry from said interrogation device.

5. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 4 wherein at least one of said said interrogation devices is a Bluetooth compliant integrated circuit.

6. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 4 wherein at least some of said electronic devices are radio frequency identification tags and wherein said interrogation device is an identification tag reader capable of remotely identifying identification tags within a predetermined range of said tag reader.

7. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 4 wherein at least a given one of said electronic devices includes a global positioning system device capable of producing data indicating the absolute position of said given one of said electronic devices.

8. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 1 wherein said first computer is a Web server computer connected to accept said one or more rules from a user via the Internet.

9. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 1 wherein said condition part further specifies a time of day condition which must also be satisfied when said relative position condition is satisfied.

10. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 1 wherein said action part

specifies a named procedure to be performed on a target computer when said condition part is satisfied.

11. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 10 wherein said action part further identifies said target computer.

12. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 1 wherein at least one of said objects is a container for others of said objects and wherein said condition part defines at least one relative position condition to be satisfied by the position of said container relative to one or more specified objects.

13. The method for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 1 wherein at least one of said objects is an identification token issued to a designated bearer and wherein said condition part defines at least one relative position condition to be satisfied by the position of said identification token relative to one or more specified objects.

14. Apparatus for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects , said apparatus comprising, in combination:

an electronic device that can be identified at short range attached to or forming a part of each of said plurality of objects, said electronic device including means for storing and transmitting a unique assigned identification value upon request,

first input means for accepting one or more rules from a user, each of said rules containing a condition part and an action part, said condition part defining at least one relative position condition to be satisfied by specified ones of said objects and each action part defining at least one specified action to be performed when said condition part is satisfied,

detection means for generating position and identification data providing relative position information and the unique assigned identification value for specific identified ones of said electronic devices,

a processor for processing said position and identification data in accordance with said rules, and

performing the functions defined in the action part of each of said rules whose condition part is satisfied by said position and identification data.

15. Apparatus for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 14 wherein said detection means includes an interrogation device capable of determining whether said specific identified ones of said objects are within a predetermined range of said interrogation device.

16. Apparatus for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 15 wherein said interrogation device is a Bluetooth compliant integrated circuit.

17. Apparatus for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 15 wherein said specified ones of said electronic devices are radio frequency identification tags and wherein said interrogation device is an identification tag reader capable of detecting the presence of said identification tags within a predetermined range of said tag reader.

18. Apparatus for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 15 wherein at least a given one of said electronic devices includes a global positioning system device capable of producing data indicating the identify and absolute position of said given one of said electronic devices.

19. Apparatus for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 14 wherein said action part further

specifies the content and destination of a message to be delivered when said condition part is satisfied.

20. Apparatus for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 14 wherein at least one of said objects is a container for one or more specified objects and wherein said condition part defines at least one relative position condition to be satisfied by the position of said container relative to said one or more specified objects.

21. Apparatus for performing one or more specified functions in response to the changing relative positions of a plurality of objects as set forth in claim 14 wherein at least one of said electronic devices is an identification token issued to a designated bearer and wherein said condition part defines at least one relative position condition to be satisfied by the position of said identification token relative to one or more of other electronic devices.